

upperparts, and pale brown median and greater coverts and primaries. The chin, throat, belly and undertail-coverts were white and the breast barred dark brown. There was a clear white supraloral spot. Wing length was 75 mm and weight 19 g. Whilst the species is not uncommon in Nigeria⁵, it is unknown from Togo.

These observations represent the first documented records of these species in Benin, while White-browed Forest Flycatcher is an addition to the Dahomey Gap list.

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The first Golden Nightjar *Caprimulgus eximius* in Cameroon

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Un Engoulevent doré *Caprimulgus eximius* a été observé et photographié dans le nord du Cameroun, le 25 mars 2003. Ceci constitue la première mention pour le pays.

Golden Nightjar *Caprimulgus eximius* is confined to the Sahelian belt, where it is variously described as being uncommon to rare¹, locally uncommon to fairly common³, uncommon and perhaps even rare⁴, common and widespread⁵, and not uncommon⁶. It rarely reaches south of 12°N and, like many remote-area nightjars, there is generally very little known about the species, it having rarely been seen and perhaps never tape-recorded², and only a few nests discovered.

On 25 March 2003, at 06.30 hrs, together with Michael Mills, Ron Hoff and Dollyann Meyers and while searching for Cricket Warbler *Spiloptila clamans* 4 km north of Mora, in northern Cameroon, a male Golden Nightjar was flushed. It quickly resettled close by and was observed for c20 minutes (Figs 10–11, p 122). The area was a beige

gravelly plain bisected by wadis, sparsely vegetated with short stunted *Acacia* and *Combretum* spp, and short, yellow grass. Before we flushed the bird, we had speculated that this constituted ideal habitat for the nightjar, and that a visit at dusk could be productive. When the bird was flushed from directly underfoot, it flew up from the gentle slope of a wadi and settled away from the wadi's centre, within the sparse shade of a leafless *Acacia*, where the bird melted into its background and was hardly visible to the naked eye from 5 m. Its yellow, patterned plumage blended so well with the ground and yellow grass as to render the bird almost invisible. This was the most perfectly camouflaged of any nightjar we have seen. It was flushed once more in an attempt to photograph the wing pattern. This time it settled closer to the wadi's centre,

partly within the shade of a sparsely leaved *Combretum* shrub. The broad white band on the upperwing was bordered boldly with black, making the wing pattern in flight very distinctive.

The area was searched again on 11 April at 05.45 hrs, just before sunrise. No nightjar calls were heard and the bird was not relocated.

This is the first record of Golden Nightjar in Cameroon and we advise birders visiting the area north of Mora, well known for Quail-plover *Ortyxelos meiffrenii* and Cricket Warbler, to also search for this species, especially in uncultivated areas.

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Sharpe's Starling *Cinnyricinclus sharpii* new to Zambia, and its status in eastern Africa

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La découverte inattendue de quelques Etourneaux de Sharpe *Cinnyricinclus sharpii* en novembre 2002 dans les Monts Mafingas en Zambie (la première donnée pour le pays) pose la question du statut de cette espèce peu commune, en particulier en ce qui concerne la population très isolée au Mont Rungwe, à 100 km au nord-est, en Tanzanie du sud.

Sharpe's Starling *Cinnyricinclus sharpii* is associated with Afromontane forest, ranging from Ethiopia to Tanzania. In the latter it occurs north of 07°S in the west (Kungwe Mahare) and of 05°S in the east (the Usambaras), with the exception of an isolated population on Mount Rungwe (09°07'S 33°42'E), in the south-west. Its discovery even further south, in north-eastern Zambia, was unexpected.

PSMB and DF, together with J & C A Coppinger and B R Jackson, were in the Mafinga Mountains, at the headwaters of the Luangwa River very close to its source (09°57'S 33°21'E), on 21 November 2002. In riparian evergreen forest at 1,970 m they found a party of four Sharpe's Starlings, and had very good, clear views for c30 minutes of one bird in particular that was perched in the canopy. The upperparts were uniformly blue-black, with a violet sheen in good light. Chin, throat and chest were white, with the abdomen buff or pale rufous. The iris was strikingly pale. In other respects these birds resembled Amethyst Starlings *C. leucogaster* in shape and behaviour

(including wing-flicking). The voice was very distinctive, with high-pitched tinkling notes and squeaks (well represented on Chappuis's CDs)². A few days later the observers were able to consult Zimmerman *et al*³ and all agreed that the birds were definitely Sharpe's Starlings.

Although known from as close as Mount Rungwe in Tanzania (some 100 km to the northeast) the species' status there is unclear, with very few records. Since Fülleborn collected it there in October 1894¹⁰, the species has been reported only sometime in the period late October to mid-November 1962 (collected by G Heinrich, specimen in Yale Peabody Museum), late October 1971 (quite common, in song, with four specimens collected by RJD, R Stjernstedt and T O Osborne) and 19–27 August 1980 (seen by F P Jensen, in song). Previous visits to the Zambian side of the Mafingas (between July and December) have never located Sharpe's Starling^{1,4,7}. Intensive work on the Nyika Plateau in neighbouring Malaŵi and extensive surveys of all of the montane forests of northern Malaŵi and adjacent Zambia never